

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-14 and 18-36 are active in this application, claims 15-17 having been cancelled and claims 37-40 having been withdrawn. Claim 1 has been amended to limit the polymer solution to comprise at least one member selected from hyaluronan, copolymers of hyaluronan and mixtures thereof. This amendment is supported by original claim 17. The remaining claims have been amended as needed to correct their dependencies. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Reneker and under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over Kim. Neither of these references relate in any way to electroblowing of hyaluronan or copolymers of hyaluronan as now required by the present claims. Reneker describes the making of nanofiber webs of polymers, with the only examples of polymers given being those at column 3, lines 50-58. Nowhere within this list is there suggested that hyaluronan or copolymers of hyaluronan can be used in their process. Likewise, Kim discloses various polymers useable in their process at paragraph [0020], which include thermoplastics and thermosets such as those listed. However, there is no suggestion of hyaluronan or copolymers of hyaluronan within their listing of polymers, nor any polymer related to hyaluronan containing polymers.

One of the important aspects of the present invention is that the claimed process is particularly useful for the production of nanofibers made of hyaluronan containing polymers. As disclosed in the present application this is especially important, since hyaluronan is known to have unusually high viscosity making it difficult to prepare highly concentrated solution, and hyaluronan solution shows a high surface tension. This results in making hyaluronan containing polymers very difficult to process using conventional spinning techniques. There is nothing within either of Reneker or Kim to suggest that either of their processes would

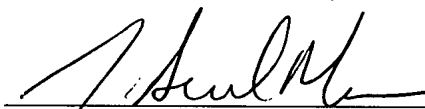
permit the preparation of nanofibers of hyaluronan or copolymers of hyaluronan. This was truly a significant achievement by the present inventors.

Since neither Reneker nor Kim suggest that either of their processes could be used to spin nanofibers from hyaluronan or copolymers of hyaluronan or mixtures thereof, these references cannot anticipate the present invention, nor render the present invention obvious. Accordingly, the rejections should be withdrawn.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



J. Derek Mason
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 35,270

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)